

GUIDE

A Publication of the Paulist Fathers

AFTER CONVERSION — THEN WHAT?

How to help converts grow to full Christian maturity
in a confused un-Christian world.

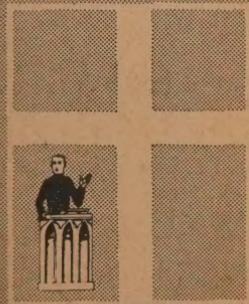
Reverend John T. McGinn, C.S.P.

CONVENTION FOR CONVERTS

An organization for new converts to help them fully
assimilate the treasures of the Faith.

Monsignor Leonard B. Nienaber

MAY 1960, No. 148



REV. MSGR.
SEPHER J. MULLEN, STD
27 ANSEL RD.
EVELAND, OHIO
1962



IT SEEMS TO ME

The Unity of the Apostolate

The ultimate objective of the Catholic Church is the conversion of every living person to fruitful membership in the Mystical Body. The explicit command of Christ and His wish to impart the fullness of His truth and grace to all men is beyond doubt. Every apostolate in the Church makes its distinctive contribution to this ultimate end.

Men vary, however, in their basic religious and spiritual attitude toward the Church. Some misunderstand and even hate her. Others, and their number is not inconsiderable in the U. S., are closer to actual conversion than they realize. Then there are Catholics themselves who, by reason of their faulty knowledge or practice of the Faith, greatly impede her progress in winning all men to Christ's Church.

We know by experience that sudden conversions are rare. Conversion is usually a process or a journey and sometimes it is long and arduous. In the Providence of God, there is ordinarily a period of preparation required before an individual is assisted by grace to say "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." And this period of preparation for ultimate conversion can be even more difficult in the case of a nation.

As a consequence, there are apostolates which labor for the conversion of the world *indirectly* and work with a view to long-range results. Whatever their own immediate and sublime objectives may be, they perform the indispensable task of preparing souls and facilitate their journey toward the Church. They also serve to correct deficiencies in Catholics to the end that they will give ever more perfect witness for Christ's cause.

Interested inquirers increase in the measure that obstacles have been removed and to the extent that Catholics truly represent their Savior. The apostolate to non-Catholics then confronts an ever increasing number of souls who are either curious or deeply interested in the Church. At this point, a direct, personal and immediate approach toward their conversion is justified and necessary.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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After Conversion— Then What?

By John T. McGinn, C.S.P.

God doesn't ordinarily pour out on the convert to Catholicism the full knowledge of things Catholic at the moment of Baptism. But we often act as if He did. We who were born to the Faith forget that our own Catholic training wasn't just a matter of months as is the convert's, but stretches back years and years.

Many converts to the Faith go on to become excellent Catholics, but there are those who don't, those who fall by the wayside. How many we could save by a little thoughtfulness and understanding!

Conversion isn't the end of the road for the new Catholic; it's just the beginning. And he needs the help of other, older (in the Faith) Catholics if he is to develop to full Christian maturity.

Father, what about the new convert who constantly asks questions about Catholic faith and practice. Could you suggest some general pointers on how to assist them?

Continued "after-care" or "follow-up" work for converts is vitally essential if they are to find themselves at home in the Church. Without this aid, their early period of adjustment is made unnecessarily difficult. Some converts, because of our neglect, remain ill-at-ease in the Church for years. God uses us to guide their first awkward steps so that they may eventually become fully mature Catholics. In general, exercise something like the same sympathetic interest and care that you do with your own children's religious development. Incidentally, this will be an opportunity for you to review and renew your own grasp and practice of the Faith.

Inquirers receive a systematic course of religious instruction. Why is further coaching required?

Even the most competently conducted and thorough course isn't really enough. Conversion is not the end of the line. It is, however, important and decisive—a stage on the soul's spiritual journey. Usually, the inquirer meets a priest twice a week for three months. Besides studying the catechism, he is encouraged to do additional reading, to ask questions, and gradually to form Catholic habits of behavior and worship. Normally, this suffices to convince him of the claims of the Church and to give him a grasp of the essentials. But it cannot compare with the extensive, continuous training a "born" Catholic ordinarily receives from his cradle-days on up.

What do you mean by saying that conversion is a "stage on a soul's spiritual journey"?

Well, Baptism, with all its rich gifts, is only the beginning of the supernatural life. God intends the soul to develop to full Christian maturity. This process of continued growth ends only at death. God, who has been guiding the convert to the Church, has further ambitions for him. To achieve these high hopes, the convert must deepen his knowledge of God's designs, drink deeply from the sources of grace, and increase in love of God. Retarded souls are more pathetic than children who fail to attain normal physical growth.

Rosalind Murray, like many other converts, wrote a book on her conversion; then afterwards she wrote a second book with the revealing title: *The Further Journey*. Some of the most poignant pages of Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain* re-

Courtesy of *Ave Maria*, published weekly at Notre Dame, Indiana. \$6.00 for one year.

veals his failure in continued spiritual advance during the period immediately following his conversion. Probably the convert's greatest need at this stage is to be aided in Catholic *formation* as well as in receiving additional information.

Would you explain that distinction?

You can understand that before conversion, emphasis was placed on the *what* and the *why* of Catholicism. Now there is need for stress on the *how*. Catholics not only accept a body of religious truth, they live the Catholic life. Belief and practice go hand in hand. "Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only." In the catechumenate of the early Church, knowledge of the Christian mysteries was accompanied by training in virtuous habits and increasing participation in the liturgy. Ideally, each instruction given an inquirer should conclude with encouragement to undertake some specific Catholic practice. Some converts do not learn the common prayers, nor attend Mass, nor put their spiritual house in order until the course is nearly over.

Doesn't the catechism treat matters like the Commandments and devotions as well as articles of the creed?

Yes. But some texts are apt to stress proof and logical demonstration. Others, while not neglecting this, are psychologically more sound in pointing out things to do right from the start. There is a new catechism for adults, *Life in Christ*, by Fathers Killgallon and Weber, which is excellent in this respect. If I were asked to recommend one book to help your neighbor, this would be my choice. The great Catholic renewal now underway has had its influence on the *art* of teaching Christian Doctrine. This new catechism is both up-to-date and positive in its approach.

Who is primarily responsible for this "after-care" for converts?

Among the laity, the sponsor at Baptism. Catholic relatives, friends and neighbors, too, have their part to play. The great English Churchman, Archbishop Ullathorne tells how he always selected or approved a prospective sponsor for his converts at the start of instructions. This person would attend the lessons with the inquirer, an-

swer questions and fill in details privately, and continue to be of help after Baptism. This is in close conformity with the practice of the early Church.

My impression is that sponsors at Baptism are not always aware of their responsibility?

That is unfortunately true. Nor are Catholics in general sufficiently aware of the convert's need and rightful claim upon their assistance. A confrere of mine, Father Aloysius Burggraft, C.S.P., of the Information Center in Baltimore, has a brief page of instructions which he gives to sponsors of converts. Let me read you the beginning: "You have both a great privilege and a real obligation. You have a golden opportunity to share the riches of Catholic faith and practice with converts by assisting them through the transition period from former religious loyalties until they become firmly rooted in the Church. They will need your assistance to become acquainted with the details of the practice of the Faith and to meet the priests of their proper parish."

There follows some concise, practical advice regarding the convert's special needs regarding attendance at Mass, fruitful reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, and membership in some parish society.

The conclusion of this instruction is worth quoting in full: "One of the real problems in convert work is the leakage, most of it due to discouragement. Through your interest and good example, the convert will become a practical and devout Catholic. God will bless you and so will the convert for your every effort."

This seems to indicate that some converts do fall by the wayside. Yet I've often heard that converts make the best Catholics!

Most converts do negotiate "the further journey" successfully. In knowledge of the Faith, fervor in practice and active zeal—they often surpass the "born" Catholic. But it is a fact that some do not ever become fully adjusted. And others do fall away. On the basis of the relatively few studies by Catholic sociologists, it is by no means certain that converts make the best Catholics. My guess is that they have the edge on "cradle" Catholics, generally speaking.

We do know they respond with varying degrees of generosity to the blessings offered to them. Much depends on their own sincerity and good will.

But one thing that helps them make this adjustment is the interest and help offered them by Catholics. Converts are often like newly naturalized citizens in a strange land. They are convinced of the wisdom of the step they have taken. But the gaps in their knowledge need to be filled in. And they must take on the habits and customs of their new land. For all this, frequent guidance is ordinarily needed.

Precisely in what details is a new convert likely to require immediate help?

Much depends on the thoroughness with which he was instructed and the degree of interest he brought to the course. Quite probably he has grasped only part of what he was taught. Very likely he is bewildered by many things he sees other Catholics doing and fears to make a public spectacle of himself. He's like a person who knows a little about the construction of a car, has had a few practice lessons, and now attempts to drive alone for the first time.

First, I'd invite him to church when no service is scheduled. Quite leisurely, explain the things you see and especially what a Catholic *does*, from the holy water font to the altar and tabernacle. Distinguish between the primary and secondary things. In preparation for this guided tour, obtain for him a pamphlet by Father C. C. Martindale, S.J., *What You See in a Catholic Church*, [International Catholic Truth Society, 407 Bergen Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.]. Another helpful text at this time is *At Your Ease in the Catholic Church* by Mary Perkins.

What are these "primary" matters that should receive particular emphasis?

The way to attend Mass, how to go to Confession, and how to receive Holy Communion. Obtain a simple prayer book (unless he has made some progress). While elementary, a pocket-sized booklet will answer the basic questions on how he should follow the Mass. A readiness to encourage and answer his questions will, in time, familiarize him with those basic matters.

Later he should become more familiar with the missal and the rosary. All this cannot be done in one or two lessons. So, easy does it. In due time, you might suggest that he read *Of Sacraments and Sacrifice* by Clifford Howell, S.J. This will introduce him to the deeper riches of the Mass and the sacraments. It will impart a greater appreciation of the Church and participation in the Holy Sacrifice.

Is there any organized effort to assure this "after-care" of converts?

Yes, the Guilds of St. Paul, with headquarters at Lexington, Kentucky, is an outgrowth of two decades of zealous efforts on the part of Msgr. Leonard Nienaber. This is now a national organization of Convert Clubs throughout the country.

Briefly, these clubs welcome converts—with their Catholic relatives or friends. They provide for the advanced instruction of converts, the development of their spiritual life and social needs, along with encouraging them to be zealous. Conventions are held in Lexington every two years, and a booklet of suggestions is provided on the organizing of similar clubs. While Msgr. Nienaber is emphatic on the need of "follow-up" after conversion, he wisely warns against the danger of "segregating" converts. The time comes when they should cease to think of themselves as converts—least of all, as a sort of exotic Catholic.

Many priests encourage the convert to join immediately some parish society and—through the year—provide special opportunities for their growth in religious knowledge and holiness, along with social gatherings and channels for their zeal. Special lectures, a library, retreat days (or closed retreats), periodical socials for converts—these are some of the activities found most helpful.

Do converts ever experience regret or disappointment at the step they have taken?

Maurice Baring once remarked that becoming a Catholic was the one act of his life that he never regretted. It is understandable, of course, that their first fervor will lose something of its emotional character. Honeymoons do not last forever. But while the mood of exultation gradually subsides, most converts soon settle down to

the work of the Christian life with a quiet sense of gratitude and great confidence in the Church.

When converts are tempted to disappointment, this usually arises from the scandalous lives of bad Catholics, the ordinariness of the mediocre Catholic and the coolness which they meet from many in the Church. Common sense and time help them to distinguish between the human and the divine elements in the Mystical Body. They soon learn that for every moral evil, religious deficiency or need, there is a remedy provided by Christ's Bride. And they come to realize that reform, like charity, begins at home. They apply to themselves the reminder of Cardinal Newman that the level of religion begins to rise through the world whenever it begins to rise in any individual heart.

My impression is that they are most keenly hurt by many Catholics who remain aloof and unfriendly where converts are concerned. Certainly this is not true of all Catholics, or even the majority, but the complaint is too widespread to dismiss casually.

But isn't friendliness a two-way street? Perhaps these critics do not go half-way to be friendly with older Catholics.

Temperament does have something to do with it. Some converts are diffident, others can be aloof or even unsociable themselves. But this is not the full answer.

Father John S. Kennedy once suggested that some Catholics were standoffish, exclusive and sometimes downright chilly toward converts. His article was widely read and elicited many letters of comment, especially from converts. He later reported that only one of the newcomers completely disagreed with his charge that many Catholics were at fault in this respect.

But how does this distant attitude of Catholics manifest itself?

In the hurrying crowds who dart to Mass, cloak themselves in their private devotions, and rush home without a word of greeting to anyone. Or again, in the unwillingness—or inability—of others to answer the convert's questions or appeals for the type of aid we have been discussing. Cold water is often thrown on the convert's enthusiastic attempts to discuss some Cath-

olic project, or suggest some work of zeal, or some clearly needed improvement.

I'm not referring to the type of convert one occasionally meets who is imprudent, supercilious and supposedly capable of solving all the Church's problems within a month after reception. I'm speaking of the normal, well-balanced, genuinely interested convert. He too frequently protests that he is treated like an "associate" member of the Church.

What would you suggest by way of correction?

First, we should remember that one of the most prominent characteristics of American Protestantism, which is the religious background of many converts, is sociability. Ministers frequently visit the homes of their people, and greet them at church. Members of the congregation call on new arrivals and invite them to church affairs. There is a real effort made to create a warm, friendly atmosphere in church and to convey a sense of belonging. Converts, especially those whose conversion causes estrangement from relatives or friends, are especially sensitive to anything like indifference from Catholics.

I am not advocating the immediate adoption of any and all Protestant customs. It would be helpful, however, if Catholics themselves revived many neglected Catholic customs. Old Catholics and converts should be vividly aware of the healthy currents stirring in the Church. Increasing emphasis on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, greater participation in the liturgy, a growing sense of parish solidarity and our obligations in justice and charity to all men—these are the correctives for unchristian selfishness.

Both new and old Catholics are equally children of God, brothers of Christ and members of one another. The Church is our Father's house. When a convert is received, he has come home—and should be welcomed accordingly.

I've heard it said that converts make the best convert-makers.

I recently put that identical question to 10 priests noted for their interest in winning converts. Seven out of 10 answered in the affirmative. Certainly the vitality and

zeal exercised by converts is a major factor in the current Catholic revival.

Converts now know the Church from within but they also know, from bitter experience and in detail, how much she is misunderstood by those outside. They are understandably eager to explain their decision to close friends and loved ones and to share the blessings of Catholicism with them.

Consequently, they are apt to capitalize on the frequent opportunities that arise to make people better disposed toward the Church. Having traveled each step of the journey to the Church themselves, they are better able to assist non-Catholics who might otherwise bog down on the long path that leads to Christ's Church. One of the first converts I baptized brought three inquirers to instruction within the following year. Another was instrumental in bringing 10 relatives and friends to the Church in a five-year period. Priests in mission countries find that this is the rule rather than the exception.

Yet, are not converts overzealous at times?

This happens occasionally. But the tense, over-anxious, impetuous apostle is frequently found among "born" Catholics as well. And I'm afraid that the charge of imprudence or fanaticism brought against convert-zeal is often a disguise for what is really lethargy or ignorance of the duties of the lay apostolate. Some converts need to be restrained from hasty, over-enthusiastic forays into strongholds of heresy or secularism. But granted good sense, converts should be encouraged to exercise their zeal both in the personal and social apostolate. They should bear witness to Christ among their close associates and they should strive to extend Christian principles in the institutions to which they belong.

Have you any concrete suggestions on apostleship that would apply to a new convert we might know?

When he is able to stand on his own feet in the ordinary practices of a Catholic, he might be encouraged to review the implications of the sacrament of Confirmation. If the Christian Family Movement is organized locally, urge him and his wife to join. I advise converts to read *Giants of the Faith* by Father John A. O'Brien. The stories of these great converts (St. Paul, Augustine, Newman, Chesterton and American converts like Brownson and Hecker) will teach them invaluable lessons in zeal. An excellent volume on the lay apostolate is *Lend Me Your Hands* by the veteran Maryknoller, Father Bernard F. Meyer.

It appears that this is quite a job.

Yes, it's an important job, but not as tough as it might at first seem. We all teach and advise one another; husbands and wives, parents and children, older children and younger, experienced workers and apprentices, friend and friend. You are a devoted Catholic and know, or can easily discover, the answer to most of the questions raised by the new convert. And you will not be alone. The priest who gave him instructions will probably keep in touch with him. And other Catholics, too, will help.

Take problems one at a time. Catholic growth—like any other kind of organic development—requires cultivation and time. If you have the "understanding heart" the Bible recommends, you may enjoy in all this one of the most satisfying experiences of your life. You are co-operating with the Holy Spirit in forming a soul after the image of Christ. You will be assisted by Omnipotence itself—and you'll win an unending reward.

"I should go to Rome not as a critic or a teacher, but as a child and a learner."

Robert Hugh Benson

Convention for Converts

By Monsignor Leonard B. Nienaber

It is easy to understand why the convert—let us call him Joe Smith—returned to the Guild of St. Paul meeting each month. He had lost his Presbyterian friends since he was received into the Catholic Church five months ago. He had been such a faithful Presbyterian, too. His friends could not understand how he happened to become interested in Catholicism. But it happened, and Joe knew no Catholics except Father Brown who had instructed and baptized him.

The first ardor of his baptism and Holy Communion did not cool too suddenly, because new friends were at his side. Members of the Guild of St. Paul of Lexington, a club for converts, were present at his baptism to welcome him. One convert was appointed his official spiritual guardian. He saw to it that he was provided with missal, rosary, and scapular. Like a guardian angel he cared for the every need of this new Catholic.

At the meeting of the Guild, the third Tuesday of the month, Joe was amazed to meet a roomful of converts. And they were easy to meet, not only because each person was labeled with a name tag but because of the friendly atmosphere of something in common shared by all.

RECEIVED AS A PARTNER

After the usual preliminary minutes and reports, Joe Smith was officially introduced to the club, with a few sentences of biography and a ceremonial induction. Then he heard the chairman of the numerous committees give rapid reports. The special-events chairman expressed satisfaction with the three-day retreat and Communion breakfast held since the last meeting. The telephone chairman reported that her cap-

tains had reminded the 120 members about the meeting and discovered that a few were ill or unable to come. The recognition committee told about baptismal anniversaries and cards of sympathy or congratulations sent to members. The extension chairman reported that the usual 1,200 pieces of Catholic literature had been mailed to the list of non-Catholics. "Does any member have names of prospects to add to this list?" she concluded.

Joe Smith had just about become comfortably settled in his chair when he heard his name again called by the president. He was asked to serve on the extension committee and assist with the mailing. Then the Spiritual Director outlined the Liturgy for the coming month. He noted the principal feasts as well as any fastdays. He encouraged members to participate with Holy Mother the Church in yearning for the coming of Christ during these Sundays of Advent. He explained why purple vestments would be worn. He then urged members to continue to bring non-Catholics to the Friday-night inquiry class, to listen to Catholic radio and TV programs, and to send letters or cards to local stations encouraging something which was to be approved or registering disapproval for anything that was not wholesome.

After all of these reports, which were even more brief than the time it takes to tell about them, because the Board Directors had completed most of the business before the full membership meeting, the president turned the proceedings over to the program chairman. Joe found that each meeting is made attractive by some feature of educational value.

Tonight's discussion explained the "Seven Virtues and Seven Vices." Fourteen members were prepared to speak one minute on a vice or a virtue. Seven were marked with white crepe paper to represent the virtues and seven with black paper for the

vices. Questions could be asked from the floor at any time.

Each month's program, whether it is a talk or a forum or a playlet, develops into a free-for-all question-and-answer session in which every person present participates. Really each meeting is a glorified discussion group. A prayer composed especially for converts closed the meeting. Of course, there was the singing of "Come, Holy Ghost" before the meeting and "Holy God" at the conclusion, because new Catholics like to sing.

Joe went home with a smile on his face and a sense of pleasure flooded his heart. He felt that here was an organization of which he was really a part and from which he could reap untold benefits. That feeling of being alone in the Church left him. His new-found treasure was shared by others. He felt the need for additional instruction and he felt that he would receive it by monthly Guild programs. He was sure that he would not fall away from the Church, as he had seen other converts do before him.

HAVE AFTERCARE

Joe Smith, the new Catholic in Lexington, is not the only one who is receiving this personal as well as organized follow-up after his entrance into the Church. The club in Lexington has been doing it nearly 25 years for the four local Catholic churches. The movement has spread so that there are now hundreds of parishes where the converts are not left to shift for themselves but do have some type of aftercare. The National Guilds of St. Paul just grew out of a 20th century need in the Catholic Church.

The movement is spreading so rapidly that conventions are held with hundreds in attendance. Nearly five hundred persons attended the Fourth National Convention which was held in Lexington, May 16 and 17 (Pentecost Sunday), 1959. The Most Rev. William T. Mulloy, D.D., Bishop of Covington was host for the two-day meeting, and Dale Francis, the popular *Our Sunday Visitor* columnist, was the featured speaker. Priests and lay people, converts as well as "cradle" Catholics, attended these programs designed to make the individual more zealous. Detailed information may be secured from National Guilds of St. Paul, 438 W. Second St., Lexington, Ky.

The need for some follow-up after bap-

tism is emphasized by the large number of converts joining the Church—group-instruction and often group-baptism and then he is quickly dropped and left to shift for himself as an individual.

Priests are using various systems of keeping in touch with their neophytes: occasional conversations, personal house calls, telephone contacts, group Communion Sundays at least once a year, the specially appointed committee in the men's or women's parish society, the Legion of Mary, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine discussion groups, and some type of organized follow-up similar to the Lexington plan of the Guild of St. Paul.

Any formal organization should not be limited to converts only. They must not get the impression that they are a distinct brand of Catholic. Let "cradle" Catholics as well as new Catholics be a part of a group to welcome and assist the newly baptized. Catholic spouses of converts become members of the Guild. The Catholic Convert Club of Lexington, in order to broaden its scope of activity and admit Catholics, changed its name years ago to the Guild of St. Paul in honor of the great Apostle convert. The opening portion of this article describes an actual meeting of this organization.

A FRIEND IN NEED

Usually the priest cannot take care of this follow-up work by himself, or he may be moved to another charge. Some kind of help is necessary and there is an abundance of lay help which can be called into action. It is as simple as appointing an older convert in the parish for each newly baptized. Let this older member of the parish be present at the baptism and meet his protege so that he can accompany him to his first Holy Communion if there is no one else to do it. His face will be a familiar one to look for at Mass from Sunday to Sunday.

The "guardian angel" as we call this person in Lexington, may accompany the new Catholic to confession nine weeks consecutively as a novena of thanksgiving for the gift of faith. In general he will be at his beck and call for a period of six months or longer so that he thereby finds his way more easily into the Church. This preceding step of just one convert taking care of the new one can be done without any formal

organization in the parish. All that is necessary is that the pastor appoint some lay chairman so that whenever there are adult baptisms in the parish he can appoint one specific older convert for each new one.

If the parish has more than a dozen converts a year and if the pastor realizes the need of some organized after-care, he may set up a Guild of St. Paul according to the Lexington plan or adapt it to his local needs. A handbook which gives a priest the various steps for setting up a club is offered by the National Headquarters of the Guild of St. Paul at 438 West Second Street, Lexington, Ky., \$1.00.

Most priests realize the need for the spiritual direction of the newly baptized. There is spiritual growth especially in the first year or two following baptism. How can this be safeguarded? By the monthly meetings this "formation" can be directed. The monthly meetings should be limited to about fifteen minutes for routine business, but an hour or so for a thorough educational and inspirational program. The whole atmosphere of the meeting should be most

friendly and informal and each one present should and can be made to participate.

However, if a convert drops his attendance at the Guild meetings after a number of years and he has meanwhile become active in some other parish society, perhaps even an officer, then the priest must not be too concerned about his dropping Guild activities. The Guild has accomplished its purpose. He is solidly established in parish life.

In conclusion, the work of the Guild begins at the baptismal font and carries the neophyte until he is able to stand on his own feet. A Guild is not the first step in a convert program in a parish, it is the last. A priest must first make his people convert-conscious so that they will actively bring persons to inquiry classes. When the parish has a number of converts, then the Guild of St. Paul or some follow-up of the pastor's own invention, begins to function. Therefore the theme: "Don't just make converts: Keep them!" These converts in turn will go out and bring in others, so that a chain of souls is kept coming into the Church.

Clergy and Laity

"Many parishes in Western Europe and in America today are proof that priestly authority is not irreconcilable with pastoral concern. Through the life of such a parish, neither anti-clericalism nor intimidation, but mutual regard is the rule. The devotion of the faithful to their priests is a beautiful thing for any Christian to behold. It is a devotion born of sharing with him the most crucial experiences of life, yet it is characterized by a relaxed good-humor and a salty wit. Laymen in such a parish learn to distinguish between the man and the office. They acknowledge the authority of the priestly office regardless of the man; but when the man is dedicated and helpful, they develop a relationship with him that goes beyond the official one. Then he is the bearer not only of the Church's authority, but also of its parental love; and his people find it altogether natural to call him 'Father.'"

The Riddle of Roman Catholicism, by Jaroslav Pelikan, pp. 85-86.

Guide Lights

CHICAGO CONFERENCE ON ADULT CATECHETICS . . .

Chicago will play host to a highly significant convention of priests interested in the Apostolate to non-Catholics. Readers of GUIDE are strongly urged to attend and to keep the convention in their Masses and prayers. Word from Father Gerard Weber indicates that it will be under the direction of His Eminence Albert, Cardinal Meyer and will be conducted by the Foundation for Adult Catechetics and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine of the archdiocese of Chicago. Some 20,000 attractive, explanatory brochures are now going out to priests in every section of the country.

Major addresses will be delivered by Albert, Cardinal Meyer, Bishop Joseph Greco and Bishop Fulton Sheen. Other prominent speakers will include Rev. Gustave Weigel, S.J., who will discuss "The Mentality of the Present Day Inquirer" and Rev. Joseph De Vault, S.J., whose subject is "Teaching Christ from the Scriptures."

Every priest recognizes that there has been a notable increase of interest in the Catholic Church on the part of American non-Catholics. Growth in the number of inquirers raises many urgent, practical problems for busy parish priests. Apostolic priests have long been engaged in developing solutions to these problems and have worked out successful methods for winning converts. This conference aims to bring together, for a fruitful exchange of views, those priests who have questions and those who have many of the answers.

The heart of the conference will be an extensive series of workshops, small enough for individual participation and long enough to develop fundamental themes. The main theme on Monday will be: "*How Do We Teach?*" It will be concerned with how to recruit and conduct an inquiry class and the necessary follow-up procedures; visual aids, lay assistance, and the relation of the liturgy to the catechumenate. Tuesday's theme will be: "*What Do We Teach?*" It will center on the various catechetical approaches; the use of the Scriptures in instructing; and outlining instructions on our Lord, the Church, grace and the commandments. Wednesday's workshops will concentrate on: "*Whom Do We Teach?*" Dis-

cussions will revolve around matters like the mentality of the average American inquirer; the motives that prompt him to take instructions; along with special considerations helpful in dealing with city dwellers, suburbanites, the Negro, and the rural apostolate.

Leaders of the workshops will include experienced pastors and assistants from various parts of the country; directors of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; and representatives from the Paulist Fathers. These speakers will give a fifteen minute talk on a fundamental topic to be discussed by the group. Participants will then propose their personal questions or their own approaches to the matter. A panel of three or four priests with rich experience in the apostolate will be available at each workshop.

Ample provision for Masses has been arranged. And numerous hospitality rooms will be reserved for informal discussions and refreshments.

Our warmest congratulations to Fathers Gerard Weber, James Killgallon, Thomas McDonough and their associates whose vision and practical know-how make this important conference possible. Chicago invites and GUIDE urges *YOU* to try to attend.

When: Monday, May 30th through Wednesday, June 1st, 1960.

Where: The Sherman Hotel, Chicago, Ill.

For details write: Conference on Adult Catechetics, 720 No. Rush Street, Chicago 11, Ill.

BOUQUETS . . .

To Rev. John M. Oesterreicher who was recently appointed Papal Chamberlain. Monsignor Oesterreicher is director of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall in New Jersey. He is a convert from Judaism and is the editor of the Institute's scholarly year book "The Bridge." The fourth volume of this series treats the love of God in the Christian and Jewish traditions. Monsignor Oesterreicher is also the author of "Walls Are Crumbling," which describes the life and thought of seven famous modern Jewish philosophers and the roads that led them to discover Christ. . . .

To all the priests in the Negro apostolate. The number of Negroes in the U. S. has

advanced 55 per cent in the last decade. Negro Catholics now number 615,964 an increase of 217,853 over the total in 1950. Within the last decade, Negro converts totaled 100,000. One in every 12 converts in our country is a Negro, 12,066 have entered the Church last year. . . .

To Most Rev. F. J. Klein who recently established a Catholic Center in the diocese of Saskatoon in Canada. The Center has an exceptionally attractive program in downtown Saskatoon, near St. Paul's Cathedral. It consists of two sections. The lay apostolic section is under the direction of Mr. Grant Maxwell, writer and columnist. This section will supervise communications work: newspapers, radio and TV, along with general public relations. It will also help to co-ordinate programming for various lay organizations of the diocese. The information and inquiry section of the new Center will organize inquiry forums and classes "with the special aim of attracting prospective converts other than those who come to the Church because of marriage." The information division will disseminate Catholic literature, books, periodicals and pamphlets. Bishop Klein has invited the Oblates of St. Mary's Province to operate this section.

CHANGE THE IMAGE . . .

Catholics must change the image of their Church in America, Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh declared. He told the First Friday Club of Cleveland that the image of the Church today is badly distorted with too much emphasis on its organization and not enough on the personality of Christ. He also said that Catholics, because of the coming national elections, are in for a "very tough year." Some organizations, he said, have stepped up an existing image of the Church that was "tough enough."

"The image of the Church they keep before the public," he said, "is one of 'captive schools,' 'censors,' and 'inquisitors.' They speak of Spain and Colombia, over and over. The image is so complete that when the farmers of Maine go to the polls to vote on a school bus issue, they believe that General Franco is the head of the bus company." The picture to non-Catholics cannot be changed, he said, until Catholics themselves see the Church as more than an organization or parent of many cultures. "The Catholic Church is a living, dynamic, risen Christ in history," he said. "It is the Christ-image of the Catholic Church which is important."

The charge against the Church today is the same one made against it throughout

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history, he said. "It is said that the Catholic Church is totalitarian because she does not elect leaders, debate its doctrine, or resolve it by a majority vote," he observed. "In a strict sense," he added, "the charge is right. The Catholic Church is totalitarian in that it belongs totally to Christ. Laymen must work to change the picture of the Church as a kind of supernatural jail and create an image of a gentle, redeeming, hard-working Savior of mankind."

READING I'VE LIKED . . .

"Approaches to Christian Unity" by C. J. Dumont, O.P. Translation and an invaluable introduction by Henry St. John, O.P. Helicon Press. \$4.50. One of the very best books on a subject about which every priest should have deep convictions.

"Free Speech in the Church" by Karl Rahner, S.J. Sheed and Ward. \$2.75. A prudent, forthright treatment of a need in the Church.

"Protestantism" by George Tavard, A.A. Hawthorn Books. A valuable addition to the excellent Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism. \$2.95.

"Counselling the Catholic" (Modern Techniques and Emotional Conflicts). George Hagmaier, C.S.P. and Robert Gleason, S.J. Sheed and Ward. \$4.50. A practical, authoritative, readable guide for confessor and counsellor.